

FischMagazin: Interview with Chris Nannes

ASC Salmon Launch

FischMagazin: *The standard for responsibly farmed salmon was handed over to the ASC from the WWF coordinated Aquaculture Dialogues in 2013. How has the response been up to now?*

Chris Nannes: So far we have had a tremendous response to the ASC salmon standard. Several assessments have taken place in Norway since June 2013, with Jarfjord Farm of Villa Arctic AS, becoming the first ASC certified salmon farm. Three farm assessments will also take place in Australia shortly and we expect salmon producers from other regions to follow suit this year.

In terms of market penetration, apart from the European market, Japan is spearheading the introduction of ASC certified salmon. Japan's largest retailer AEON has already committed to sourcing ASC certified farmed fish. This January, a Japanese market launch of ASC salmon was organised by AEON and WWF Japan in Tokyo. This is a clear indicator that with the salmon standard available we are now reaching new markets.

FischMagazin: *ASC is holding its global market launch of salmon at Fish International in Bremen. Can you tell us a bit more about this?*



ASC's CEO- Chris Nannes

Chris Nannes: Yes, I am excited to be back in Germany for ASC's third global market launch. The previous ones for tilapia and pangasius were held in Amsterdam and Hamburg. The launch will take place on Monday 10 February at the Fish International seafood show. The event will feature ASC certified salmon producers and partners from the German market.

The addition of the salmon standard to our programme is essential. I believe it will help ASC reach a tipping point in the market. From here on, we can only go forward and grow. I very much look forward to celebrating this important step for ASC with our supporters in Bremen!

FischMagazin: *How do you see the ASC salmon programme developing in the future?*

Chris Nannes: encouraging. ASC labelled salmon products have already been successfully introduced in the Japanese market at the launch event in Tokyo.

Following the upcoming global salmon launch in Bremen, I think we will see a growing number of salmon products with the ASC logo in stores all over Europe.

I also expect ASC to enter more middle-income regions such as Brazil and India in the not so distant future. For example, the committee for the Rio Olympic summer games, has committed to sourcing ASC certified farmed fish for their catering during the games.

On the producer side, apart from farms in Norway and in Chile, there is also interest from Scotland, Faroese, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Our certification scheme is based on industry best practices and is, therefore, widely applicable. I am confident that the salmon programme will reach global scale soon and that we will see ASC certified farms in most of the world's continents shortly.



Jarfjord Farm of Villa Arctic AS -the first salmon farm to be awarded ASC certification

FischMagazin: *The Global Salmon Initiative (GSI) announced that they chose ASC as their preferred standard. What has their commitment meant for you?*

Chris Nannes: The scale of the salmon industry's commitment to improve their environmental footprint is unparalleled and is to be applauded. If other sectors followed with similar approaches the world would be a much better place. The commitment that GSI made when selecting ASC as their leading standard is obviously pivotal. Salmon is farmed worldwide with nearly two thirds of the salmon that we eat coming from farms. The GSI group represents 70 per cent of the world's salmon aquaculture producers.

GSI's commitment to significantly improving the sustainability of salmon farming mirrors ASC's aim to transform aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility. It means that the impact our standards will have on the global salmon aquaculture industry will be unprecedented.

FischMagazin: *Apart from salmon, what other standards are entering the market this year?*

Chris Nannes: We had some truly exciting developments on our standards side last year. Besides the salmon standard, we went live with the standards for freshwater trout, bivalves, abalone and shrimp. This is a tremendous achievement for such a young organisation.

Our standards team has done some exceptional work. Thanks to their efforts, all of our standards bar the one for *Seriola* and *Cobia* are now operational.

This year, our main focus will be on promoting the uptake of these standards in the market to meet the growing demand. Besides the salmon launch in Bremen, we also plan a launch for shrimp later this year.

The accreditation and training of certifiers to enable audits to commence has also got off to a promising start. Twenty certifiers were trained on these standards in 2013 alone.

I am confident that we will see yet another major growth of ASC labeled products on sale globally this year.

FischMagazin: *How has the uptake of the ASC standards been so far? How many farms have already become certified? And what progress has been made with ASC labelled products?*

Chris Nannes: We have seen a rapid uptake of the ASC certification programme since it was launched in 2012. I think the fact that some 15 per cent of the Vietnamese pangasius production is now ASC certified speaks for itself! The tilapia programme has also been very successful. Close to 30 tilapia producers have become certified and the number is rising steadily.

There are already certified farms in seven countries worldwide: from Ecuador, Costa Rica and Honduras in the west; to Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Taiwan in Asia.

Combining the recently



Vietnam Press Trip, organized by the ASC

announced certified salmon farms together with the new standards for shrimp, trout, abalone and bivalves; we will soon see more certified farms across other regions in Europe, South America and Australia. I am confident that we will fulfill our vision of becoming the leading responsible aquaculture certification scheme worldwide in the not so distant future.

In terms of products on sale, breaking the 500th labelled product milestone last year was a very special occasion for us. The speed of the uptake that we have seen since launching the ASC logo in 2012 has been truly amazing.

At the end of 2013 we had over 600 -products across 24 countries and numbers increase daily. The growth in Europe has been fastest, and the uptake in North America has also been encouraging. And with the strong support for ASC certified salmon in Japan, it is a sign that we are breaking out of the traditional European markets.

FischMagazin: *ASC is a global certification scheme. What are you doing to ensure that small scale producers can enter the programme?*

Chris Nannes: We are working on a number of initiatives to ensure that the ASC certification programme is accessible to a wide range of producers globally.

As the majority of aquaculture production comes from small and medium sized farms, it is important to ensure that these farms are able to adopt ASC's standards for responsible fish farming.

To address this, ASC is working on a methodology that will allow groups of smaller farms to collectively achieve certification. Group certification will enable the producers to share knowledge and the costs for certification. This ensures that small-scale operations have the opportunity to enter the ASC programme and become certified against the standards.

The methodology draws on best practice group certification systems within and outside of the sector. The project will be pilot tested in the first half of this year and it is expected to be launch by the end of the year.

FischMagazin: *What are the next steps for ASC? How do you see the organization developing over the next year?*

Our focus this year will be to build on the seven standards that we have launched up to now. The Seriola and Cobia standard is also anticipated to go live later this year.

Another important project for ASC is the development of the global feed standard. We will continue our work on the standard, and it will be piloted this year. The final standard is set to be launched by the end of 2016.

We also have a hectic schedule for the spring. Besides participating in the Fish International seafood show in Bremen, you can also find us at the International Seafood Show in March and at the European Seafood Exposition in May in Brussels.

We will also continue to work on our existing collaborations with partners in the seafood sector. Finalising our collective work with GAA and Global GAP to ensure that a single audit can provide certificates against more than one programme will be an important development. Making sure that the relationship with MSC around their support for ASC chain of custody and logo licensing continues to provide value to the companies supplying certified and labeled fish is also important. The ASC aims to deepen its existing partnerships over 2014, creating further efficiencies and value for producers and supply chain partners.